

~~A. Peirce Jr.~~  
LETTER

TO

M<sup>R.</sup> Eveleigh;

In ANSWER to his, printed  
at the End of the

*Account of the Reasons, &c.*

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By JAMES PEIRCE. 

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EXON:

Printed by ANDREW BRICE, at the  
Head of the Serge-Market. 1719.

# LETTER

TO

M. G. M.

AN AUTHOR OF HIS PUBLICATIONS



ACCOMPLISHED, &c.

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BY JAMES PERCIVAL

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EXOM

PRINTED BY ANDREW PRICE, AT THE  
HEAD OF THE STATIONERY ROW. 1782.



A

# LETTER

TO

## MR. EVELEIGH, &c.

SER



HAVE seen the *Letter*, which you did me the honour to write concerning me, and which is publish'd at the end of the *London* edition of the *Account*. I could have wish'd you had address'd your *Letter* to my self, and in a more private way, that the world might have known nothing of the satisfaction which I am forced to give you in this publick manner.

The great design of your *Letter* is to shew, how solemnly and repeatedly you sought to have some *conferences* appointed between Mr. *Hallet*.

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Mr

Mr. *Withers*, and my self, on the one hand, and your self and some other ministers, on the other. The matter of fact I freely own: you propos'd these *conferences*, as you say, *solemnly*; which I don't wonder at, because I believe you cannot propose any thing in another manner; you propos'd them likewise *frequently*, it seems, after many *refusals*; which would have appear'd very strange to me in any man, unless he were of the temper of Mr. *Eveleigh*, or the man describ'd in *Horace's Satyr*, *Ibam forte via sacra, &c.* whom I could not forbear often rememb'ring while I was reading your *Letter*.

You expect, no doubt, I should give my reasons for refusing this *solemn* and *repeated proposal*; and I shall give you them with that frankness which I remember you have seem'd to approve of in me. I had then some reasons against conferring with you who made the proposal, and others against conferring with such as were likely to be join'd with you.

As to your self; I apprehended such *conferences* might beget an uneasiness between us, who were neighbouring ministers; and therefore thought it better to avoid them. You know I have been concern'd with you, and had occasion to see your management; and since you are not unacquainted with my opinion of it, you cannot be disjunct with your friend, who was careful to avoid the temptation of shewing, as in all probability he must have shewn, his dislike of that which you seem'd so highly to approve your self. I had likewise observ'd another thing in you, which seem'd to render me very unfit to confer with you; and that was, that you often appear'd fond of making long speeches, when I was too dull of understanding

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to perceive what you intended, so that I could not hope for the benefit, which you in your great kindness design'd me. Besides, your way of reasoning was so different from mine, that let which will be the better, we were not much like to edify one another by a conference. I could not expect my discourse should do much good upon you, unless I could fill it with allegories, quaint allusions, and such-like pretty turns, which, alas ! would have cost me so much hard study to invent, that I was too *weak-bodied* to be able to endure it, unless I would have been content to be taken off from my *preaching*, &c. which I knew you were against. And as little could I expect to profit by you : I don't say the fault was not in my self, but this I found to be actually the case. I have not been able to remember the pretty things you have let fall in my company, (I attribute it to the want of a *genius* in my self) many times I could not understand them, and was loth to give you the needless trouble of repeating them ; and if I perceiv'd your meaning, I soon used to forget what you took a great deal of pains (I thank you) to make me understand. There is one instance I can recollect, and will set before you ; and the rather because by mentioning it I shall not discover any secret, you having frequently dropt it in other company. It was your proof of the unlawfulness of using organs in the worship of God, from those words of the apostle, *Be not drunk with wine wherein is excess, but be ye filled with the Spirit.* And tho' you took much pains to make me understand your way of reasoning, and I am fond enough of any argument in favour of a conclusion I like ; yet I profess, if you would give me the world, I am not able to give an account, how you put these

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things together. I hope you will not be displeas'd that I give you an opportunity of communicating your noble thought to the world, which otherwise is like to be quite lost, especially in the rest of those you imparted it to should happen to be as simple as my self.

Besides, I might perhaps think I had not *mathematics* enough to take in the demonstrations you might offer. I remember very well I tried once, but could make nothing of your *faith solemnly put into the form of an equatorial triangle*. And can you blame my prudence, that I cared not to expose my self in a *solemn conference* by appearing confounded with such kind of demonstrations?

I am much obliged to you for furnishing me with a scrap of our conversation when together, which I hope upon second thoughts, will help you to perceive I was not the most unreasonable man in the world, in refusing *solemn conferences*. Thus you are pleased to relate it : *He then talk'd of impositions, I said our schemes were as much against impositions as his ; but christianity, said I, is no imposition.* Ay ! but your christianity ought to have common sense. *That was his reply.* No doubt you have satisfied your reader, that I have declined conferring, from a fear of such a shrewd reasoner, who would tell his tale so well top after the conference was over. *Christianity, is indeed as you say, no imposition, consider'd in it self ; nor is the Book of common Prayer, when consider'd in like manner ; but if christianity be imposed by men, do's it not then become an imposition ?* My notion is, that the state should not impose *christianity*, but leave every one free to chuse his own religion, provided it interferes not with the civil interest. But if you, Sir, are for imposing *christianity*, as you are if I don't

don't mistake you, how can your scheme be as much against impositions as mine? Nay if you think you may impose christianity, because you are perswaded of the truth of it, as doubtless that is your reason; why may you not impose any thing else, concerning which you have the like perswasion? If what you mention was my reply, tho' I remember it not, you will believe me, when I assure you, that as I design'd no reflection upon christianity it self, which is undoubtedly the most reasonable and sensible institution that can be: so nor did I mean, that you had any particular spite against it. Both these must have been far from my thoughts, who could intend no more than pleasantly, and with the freedom of a friend, to rally your affecting a mysterious, intricate, and perplexed way of dis-coursing upon all things, which used to set them above the reach of men of common sense, or at least above me. And if you could recollect the representation which 'tis probable you made of *christianity* in that conversation, I am apt to think you would do a friendly part towards justifying my expression. But I must depend upon your memory and candour for this, because I have very happily lost all remembrance of it, as I often used to do of what you say.

I hope I have given you, Sir, all the satisfaction you desire, of the reasons of my refusing to confer with you. As to the other Brethren: they know I never shunn'd them, till they had formed a design and cabal against me, and had besides dealt perfidiously with me. This I shall lay open in another place.

I perceive you seem to resent it, that I should be as desirous of your writing as you were of our conferring. And I must own, had the controversy

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only been between ministers, I should have been very much of your mind, because that might have prevented noise and disturbance. But you know and complain of the growth of the opinion among the people: and certainly writing was more adapted to help them than conference. Writing would not have more *filled the country with disputes*, than the proceedings of the assembly did, which put all into confusion, tho' we were quiet enough just before. There seems to me as much need of writing as preaching about these matters; and a little more study would have serv'd for both. And the Gentlemen of Exeter were sensible of the need of both; or they would never have urged Mr. *Withers* and me to write. Nay you your self are at length sensible of it, and are accordingly favouring the world with your labours. Your writing was most likely to do me good, because I could never remember your discourse. And farther I proposed one advantage to my self this way, and that is, that it would retrench abundance of impudence, because men would be ashame to print any thing of that nature. And I do assure you, Sir, when I mention'd writing, it was not with a design to put you upon exposing your self, but rather that you might prevail upon the most able of your friends to try their skill. And as a proof of this I will acquaint you with what I believe is a secret. I am told a motion was made you to insist upon a *commendatory Preface* to your piece that is coming out, from your two leading men, Mr. *Ball* and Mr. *Walson*, which would much promote the spreading of it. This motion, I now let you know, originally came from me; who thought it would prevent your lessening your character by writing; and I was verily perswaded, those Gentlemen would

would never hazard their reputation by such a recommendation, however willing they might be that you shoud hazard yours by printing your performance. But I will not tell you all the reason I had for my persuasion concerning their prudence and policy. There is one thing you have not clear'd with reference to your insisting upon conferences; and that is, that pretending to be against imposition, you could have no more right to prescribe conferring to us, than we had to prescribe writing to you.

You will please to favour me, next time you write, with a list of the club of idle men you say we have, *who have nothing else to do but to write, or at least give me an account where they meet*; because, as I profess I know not whom you mean, the world will be apt to suspect you of being an incautious writer, if you can allege no evidence of the truth of what you advance. If you think it hard that you must write against you know not whom, you may be even with them, not letting them know against whom they write, as you know some of your friends have done, particularly the authors of *Arius dectated*. The Account to which your Letter is judgynd, and the Postscript to Mr. Trolle's Catechism.

You will take a friendly caution well, and therefore be not censorious of you know

not whom : as you are when you say the *Answerer to Mr. Trosse appear'd to have no reverence for truth* ; and 'twill be time enough for you to suppose *he had no reputation to lose*, when any of your own works shall have proved you capable of writing as good sense, as that answer contains.

If I said, as you report, the *common opinion about the Trinity was an error* ; where was the crime ? Did not the great Mr. *Howe* agree with me therein ? Nay I can allege two witnesses who were present, when one of the seven Ministers speaking of the *Trinity*, said, *Three persons were a contradiction*. You see I am as good as my word, when I said, *If I was turn'd out I would write* ; tho' the truth is, I offer'd to write whether I was turn'd out or no.

I cannot but observe to you, how solicitous you appear to be to find somewhat against me, to make me seem culpable, that so a little colour may be put upon the proceedings against me ; and as I accept of your good will, so I think you have done considerable service to my reputation, since not one thing is yet charged upon me, that looks like a crime. Thanks be to my good God, who has directed my way hitherto, in the midst of so many who have waited for my halting ! Oh ! Sir, had I trusted to your *tears in the Coffee-house*, or your promise of *keeping*

ping our conferences secret for a time, had I given you the least advantage against me, what a noise would you have then made, who can make one now, about nothing? Was it not prudent in me to refuse to have any more to do with men, who were resolved upon violence and fury, who had wilfully kindled a flame, tho' Mr. *Witbers* and I warn'd them of the consequences, and who appear'd determin'd against any measures of quenching it? Is there no hand of God to be seen in the imprudence of every step that has been taken against us? Were you only concern'd for his cause, how could so many wise men act under such a continued infatuation?

You may please to give my service to Mr. *Reynolds*, and acquaint him with the sense I have of his brotherly kindness, in desiring, as appears by the beginning of your *Letter*, that what he apprehended made against me might be made more clear. And truly I think he had need get things much better clear'd, or else he is never like to obtain that rejoicing which he seems to wait for, and which no charitable christian would ever envy him. I wonder what prudence directed you to write, or him to print, that first sentence of your *Letter*.

Nor is the prudence of the last paragraph less admirable; for by that it appears, both  
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that our brother is convinced, there was reason for my charging the Gentlemen as I had done, unless somewhat more could be said in their defence, than what was to be met with in the *Accounts*; and that the Gentlemen have nothing more to say. And so they are forced to acknowledge the truth of the charge I brought against them.

You were pleased to call what I say in my *Case*, about that unjust way they took to eject us, *my clamour*. But have I said one word of it more than is true? Dare you contradict it? And if you dare not, what must the world think of you, that can speak in such a manner, and endeavour, by a hard word given me, to palliate as gross a piece of injustice and oppression as was ever known? What must they think of you, but that as you have had a hand in *killing*, so now you are flattering with the Gentlemen in order to your taking *possession*? I must tell you, the coming into our pulpit is a taking part with the oppressors; and I expect and demand it as a piece of justice from your self and your six brethren, who advised the Gentlemen, and then decently and orderly took your turns to supply our places, that you vindicate what has been done, or else own your self inexcusable in invading what belongs to us. You ought to have made some

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some reply to what I said in the last page of  
the Case to this purpose. And whoever will  
come in our stead must expect to be look'd  
upon, and represent'd too, as one that takes  
part in the gain of oppression and injustice,  
unless he shall be able publickly to defend  
the proceedings against us. And, whatever  
you may think of it, and call it; our com-  
plaint is *clamor oppressorum*, the cry of the  
oppressed, which neither your daubing nor  
your tears shall ever be able to keep from  
ascending up to heaven. If the Gentlemen  
can get no better pleader of their cause, it  
will be honest in you to let them know they  
had better employ none at all. I have spared  
you by not taking notice of many pitiful  
mean things in your Letter, because I would  
shew you how truly I am,

As aid not arm you of nobleded ad of good  
as blood your has, yew pitiful  
zealore, bidding of honourable the  
. now to you to regard

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Your sincere friend and servant,

Exon, Apr. 30.

1719.

Jam: Peirce,

P. S. Since my finishing this Letter, Mr. *Haller* look'd out the copy of the Letter he sent you, and which you mention. 'Tis too long to be here inserted; but my thoughts of it are, that 'tis well writ, and might have satisfied any man but your self who were the proposer of the conferences, that no good was to be expected from them. 'Tis pity you were not wise enough to perceive when you had good advice given you, and that when given with a truly christian spirit, and back'd by solid reasoning. I am very glad Mr. *Haller* kept a copy of his Letter, which may make you blush, when you reflect upon what you have said of it. I would advise you to print it (as it will well bear printing) if you have any farther design of exposing your self. But I suppose you may scorn to be beholden to any man for his assistance that way, and may choose, as the most effectual method, to publish another Letter of your own.

F I N I S.

March 20<sup>th</sup> 1711



